



Texas Workforce Investment Council

Policy News Highlights

Issue 31, Quarter 3, September 2015

Policy News Highlights is a quarterly review of selected reports relevant to the policy and research functions of the Texas Workforce Investment Council (Council). Federal and state agency websites, in addition to numerous public policy and educational databases, are scanned monthly for relevant and emerging issues. Reports are catalogued and stored electronically in the Council's Information Repository (IR).

The IR is divided into 10 topic areas that correspond to priority issues supporting the Council's current strategic plan. They are: adult education, apprenticeship, career and college readiness, career and technical education, clusters and sector strategies, competitiveness, data, disabilities, supply-demand, and training. Not every topic area is addressed each quarter.

Policy News Highlights is organized as an annotated bibliography with short summaries of recent articles grouped according to their topic area.

Apprenticeship

***Registered Apprenticeship Programs: Improving the Pipeline for People with Disabilities*, U.S.**

Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, July 2015

This overview of registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships highlights prior initiatives that have focused on persons with disabilities and discusses challenges associated with providing apprenticeship programming. In addition, recommendations are provided regarding actions that federal agencies could take to promote registered apprenticeship and the associated strategies to increase the employment of people with disabilities. The report also presents career planning strategies, emphasizes the need for career and technical education preparation and planning, identifies job growth industries in the registered apprenticeship program, and underscores the continuing need for increased pre-apprenticeship opportunities to ensure youth and adults develop the skills and transferable competencies needed to enter, retain, and advance in registered apprenticeship programs.

www.dol.gov/odep/pdf/ApprenticeshipReport.pdf

Career and College Readiness

***Career Pathways Toolkit: A Guide for System Development*, U.S. Department of Labor, September 2015**

Designed to support the state level workforce professionals representing one of the core partners developing a Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act unified plan, this toolkit incorporates key

provisions in the Act related to effectively implementing career pathways. Partners may include workforce, education, and vocational rehabilitation agencies. Six key elements for developing a comprehensive career pathways system include: building cross-agency partnerships, identifying industry sectors and engaging employers, designing education and training programs, identifying funding needs and resources, aligning policies and programs, and measuring system change and performance. www.workforce3one.org/view/2001523732879857569

How Are States Reporting on College and Career Readiness, Career and College Readiness and Success Center, September 2015

Widespread variation of state reporting on readiness for careers at the end of K-12 education is addressed in this brief. It highlights misalignment between current practice in measuring readiness and readiness as a key indicator of long-term success for more than half of high school graduates who either progress directly into the workforce or who attempt to work and further their education at the same time. It identifies metrics to measure readiness based upon academic content and pathway knowledge, lifelong learning skills, and postsecondary outcomes of former students. Among the measures of career pathway knowledge, this brief cites industry-based certifications as the most commonly reported non-Perkins measure for workforce readiness. However, only 34 states currently report any measure of career pathway knowledge to the public, including those required by the federal Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. Notably, recommendations are included to help states develop practices that support measuring college and career readiness.

www.ccrscenter.org%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2FAskCCRS_Metrics.pdf

Developing Pathways to Ensure a Skilled Workforce for State Prosperity: A Framework for State Policymakers, State Pathways to Prosperity Initiative, Council of State Governments, August 2015

Representatives of diverse perspectives in all regions of the U.S. contributed a year of study, dialogue, and deliberation to produce the compilation of policy recommendations included in this report. The task force considered the key barriers to prosperity and opportunities to engage key populations of students in the learning process. Policy recommendations include the alignment of K-12, postsecondary education, and workforce development; K-16 educator preparation; access and success in education and training; effective development, sharing, and use of data; and measurement of success. Children and youth, veterans, criminal justice, and hunger and nutrition are explored in greater detail with case study highlights from multiple states.

[www.csg.org/programs/documents/Pathways to Prosperity Report.pdf](http://www.csg.org/programs/documents/Pathways_to_Prosperty_Report.pdf)

Using Comparative Information to Improve Student Success, Aspen Institute, August 2015

Community colleges are increasingly focused on student outcomes and are aligning and improving services that improve student learning and successful completion of a postsecondary credential. This guide recognizes the need for high-quality comparative data from across higher education institutions to inform efforts toward improvement. It includes guidance on how to identify a peer group of colleges and use comparative information to benchmark performance over time. It also outlines how to collect comparative student outcome information regarding completion, transfer, bachelor's degree attainment, equitable access, learning, and post-graduation success in labor markets. It encourages systematic and regular use of comparative data to inform, invent, and scale new strategies for increasing student success.

www.aspeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/content/docs/pubs/UsingComparativeInformationGuide.pdf

Making Pell Work: How America's \$30 Billion Investment in Need-Based College Aid Can Be More Job-Driven, National Skills Coalition, July 2015

This issue brief examines the role career-oriented programs have come to play in both postsecondary education and in the U.S. economy, and offers recommendations to policymakers on how to make these programs more accessible to working learners and to employers seeking to sustain or grow their businesses. To increase the utility of Pell grants, this report encourages making short-term occupational certificate programs and demand-driven noncredit programs eligible for Pell grants, and use sector partnerships to help ensure that short term and noncredit programs are demand-driven.

www.nationalskillscoalition.org/resources/publications/file/2015-07-Making-Pell-Work-How-Americas-30-Billion-Investment-in-Need-Based-College-Aid-Can-Be-More-Job-Driven.pdf

Creating Pathways to Employment: The Role of Youth/Industry Partnerships in Preparing Low-Income Youth and Young Adults for Careers in High-Demand Industries, National Fund for Workforce Solutions and Jobs for the Future, June 2015

This report highlights the primary lesson that emerged from the youth/industry partnership initiative, a focused 18-month effort to learn how employer-led industry partnerships contribute to resolving two significant workforce challenges. It focuses on the need for a collaborative effort that is led by employers and industry partnerships to build high quality employer-connected pathways to resolve the challenges of employers struggling to find skilled workers, even as young adults struggle to enter the workforce. The initiative explored how industry partnerships can lead the development of employment pathways that offer a clear sequence of courses, training credentials, and job placement in high demand sectors.

www.jff.org/sites/default/files/publications/materials/Creating-Pathways-to-Employment-073015.pdf

Clusters and Sector Strategies

Voice: The Guide to Developing Manufacturing Ambassadors, Manufacturers Institute, October 2015
Designed to help manufacturers engage students in order to develop the future workforce, this guide continues to build on the National Association of Manufacturers' *Dream It. Do It.* campaign. This approach involves developing young ambassadors to become a voice for their company and industry. It was created by manufacturers for manufacturers to help employers in the industry recruit young workers to fill job openings due to retirement. The guide presents a low cost, community engagement strategy to improve the talent supply and increase company awareness within the community. It leverages nationally developed resources, including a quick start guide, marketing and events planning materials, how-to guides, and more.

www.themanufacturinginstitute.org/DIDIAmbassador-Program.aspx

Competitiveness

Skills in the States: Sector Partnership Policy, National Skills Coalition, August 2015

Sector partnerships provide a proven education and training strategy that improves economic opportunities for workers and their families and provides a skilled labor pool for employers. This report presents findings from a 50-state scan of policies that support local sector partnerships and help the workforce system meet the needs of workers and employers in targeted industries. It finds that only 21 states have policies in place and, among these, 15 are investing state or federal resources in support of

local partnerships. States that provide funding, technical assistance, or program initiatives—at least one or all of the supports—to local sector partnerships in more than one industry are counted among those with sector partnership policies. The majority of other states have some other state-level workforce initiatives in targeted industries that may provide a foundation for state policy-making.

www.nationalskillscoalition.org/documents/2015-08-Skills-in-the-States-Sector-Partnership-Policy.pdf

Data

Better Information for Better College Choice & Institutional Performance, U.S. Department of Education, September 2015

Designed to increase transparency, the College Scorecard makes data on the outcomes of college graduates entering in the workforce available to all stakeholders, including students selecting colleges, administrators improving program quality, and employers recruiting graduates. A guiding principle in its design was determining the metrics most frequently used by students to personalize and better inform decision-making. Significant research, validation, and analysis of the data available, both through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System and the National Student Loan Data System, revealed improvements that support this transformative approach.

<https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/assets/BetterInformationForBetterCollegeChoiceAndInstitutionalPerformance.pdf>

Texas Business Outlook Surveys: Special Questions, Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, September 2015

Supplemental questions on employment expectations and the labor market were included in this monthly survey of Texas business executives. This annual survey addition highlighted hiring challenges in several sectors of the Texas labor market. Results from these questions in the Texas Manufacturing Outlook Survey, Texas Service Sector Outlook Survey, and Texas Retail Outlook Survey have been released together. The data collected represents responses from 266 Texas business executives. The surveys also collected data on the increase, decrease, or unchanged status of revenue, employment, prices, general business activity, and other indicators over the previous month.

www.dallasfed.org/microsites/research/surveys/tssos/2015/1508/tssos1508.pdf

Good Jobs Are Back: College Graduates Are First in Line, Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, August 2015

This analysis on the production of jobs since 2010 defines good jobs as those that pay \$53,000 or more and tend to be full-time with benefits such as retirement and healthcare. Findings suggest that of the 6.6 million jobs created since 2010, 2.9 million were good jobs. Comparatively, 1.8 million have been low-wage jobs and 1.9 million have been middle-wage jobs, noting that middle-wage jobs have not yet fully recovered from the recession. The report further suggests that the long-term hiring and the wage premium of college-educated workers have continued to grow stronger for more than 30 years including during periods of recession and recovery. Of the 2.9 million good jobs reported, the majority have been managers, STEM or healthcare professionals, and only 100,000 of these jobs employ people with less than a bachelor's degree. A primary distinction between this analysis and others is that occupations were used to group jobs rather than industries since an occupational analysis classifies a specific set of activities performed on the job.

cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/Good-Jobs_Full_Final.pdf

Tracking Graduates in the Workforce: Connecting Education and Labor Market Data, National Governors Association, August 2015

Including program profiles from across the U.S., this report considers best practices in using data to track recent graduates into the workforce as a means to evaluate postsecondary education and training programs at the state level. The report notes that accurate information from education and workforce data is key to well-functioning labor markets. Directed at state governors, the findings support the use of data to improve educational system outcomes of recent graduates, workers, and employers; to improve postsecondary programs and hold institutions and other education and training entities accountable; and to inform decision-making by tracking where recent graduates find employment. www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/2015/1508TrackingGraduates.pdf

The Economic Value of College Majors, Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, May 2015

Using Census data to analyze wages for 137 college majors, this report details the most popular college majors, the majors that are most likely to lead to an advanced degree, and the economic benefit of earning an advanced degree by an undergraduate major. Findings suggest that salary averages by educational attainment can be deceptive. While there is a one million dollar lifetime premium to earning a college degree after completing high school, there is a 3.4 million dollar lifetime differential between college graduates in high-paying majors and those in the lowest-paying majors. cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/Economic-Value-of-College-Majors-Full-Report-v2.compressed.pdf

Disabilities

Students at the Center: Deeper Learning for Students with Disabilities, Jobs for the Future, August 2015

Evidence-based instructional practices that help educators implement deeper learning opportunities are suggested to improve the outcomes of students with disabilities, and those without disabilities, in this report. Deeper learning activities engage students in rigorous instruction tailored to their individual needs and interests; incorporate formal and informal learning experiences; and support advancement based upon demonstrated mastery of the next level of instruction, course, or grade. Evidence suggests that these activities also improve students' ability to communicate effectively, to work well in teams, to solve complex problems, to persist in the face of challenges, and to take an active role in defining their own educational pathways. This report helps address the requirement by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, that states must fully disclose the precise steps taken to ensure better outcomes for students with disabilities. www.jff.org/sites/default/files/publications/materials/Deeper-Learning-for-Students-with-Disabilities-072815.pdf

Supply Demand

Analyzing Talent Flow: Identifying Opportunities for Improvement, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Center for Education and Workforce, July 2015

Improving the integration and use of employer and public data for critical jobs in key sectors is the focus of this guide that is designed to support an employer-driven approach to improve talent flows through targeted career pathways for all stakeholders. Talent flow analysis is a process for describing and analyzing the flow of workers into and out of a targeted set of jobs that are most critical to employers in

a given region. This guide describes the key steps for public-private economic and workforce development initiatives to implement talent flow analysis.

www.uschamberfoundation.org/sites/default/files/Analyzing%20Talent%20Flow.pdf

Training

Work Trends: The Joys and Disappointments of Older Part-time Workers, John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, September 2015

Highlighting similarities and differences between older and younger part-time workers, this report reveals two contrasting work experiences between voluntary part-time workers and involuntary part-time workers over the age of 50. The authors recognize significant differences between older workers who prefer to work full-time but cannot find a full-time job and those who prefer to work part-time. This study focused on similarities between jobs, such as similar work hours and job stability (three years or more). Findings suggest that although in cases where most of the part-time workers perform the same or similar tasks and work side-by-side with full-time workers, few part-time workers receive benefits, and the majority are paid by the hour.

www.rutgers.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?u=3bfc927d38ac8ba6e8171562e&id=5852e107d9&e=7f77fd9f8

Veterans' Licensing and Certification Demonstration, Center for Best Practices, National Governors Association for the U.S. Department of Labor, Education and Training Administration, August 2015

A variety of state and occupation-related issues challenge efforts to accelerate licensing and certification of veterans according to this interim report based on direct engagement in the demonstration states. Focusing on high-volume military occupations, such as commercial drivers, law enforcement, and medics, a framework for examining the gaps between military and civilian occupational requirements is provided that includes a process for resolving misalignment and strategies to prepare veterans with the appropriate credentials to successfully compete for these jobs. Key findings suggest that states take similar approaches to accelerate licensing and certification of veterans but all are subject to a range of state- and occupation-specific challenges. Data about each state's veteran populations was essential at all stages of the demonstration. The report provides insight into various state methods to obtain and assess data and to design and implement accelerated pathways.

www.wdr.doleta.gov/research/FullText_Documents/ETAOP_2015-03.pdf

Supporting Second Chances: Education and Employment Strategies for People Returning from Correctional Facilities, Jobs for the Future, July 2015

This brief features a case study in which state reentry specialists focus support on the housing, food, and employment needs of recently released inmates. It cites research that suggests full-time employment is a primary indicator of successful reentry for some 700,000 people transitioning out of state and federal correctional facilities each year. It also promotes developing additional education and career pathways for ex-offenders as well as policies that support efficient and effective transitions.

www.jff.org/sites/default/files/publications/materials/Supporting-Second-Chances-073015.pdf

Federal Low-Income Programs: Multiple Programs Target Diverse Populations and Needs, Government Accountability Office, July 2015

To examine research on how selected federal low-income programs may affect incentives to work, this report focuses on 82 federal programs targeted to individuals with low incomes, their families, and the communities designed to help them meet basic needs or provide other assistance. It identifies the

number and selected household characteristics of people in poverty as well as the number, poverty status, and household characteristics of selected programs' recipients. In fiscal 2013, the total expenditures of 78 of these programs were approximately \$742 billion, mostly concentrated toward Medicaid (39 percent), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the refundable portion of the Earned Income Tax Credit, and Supplemental Social Security Income. Findings suggest that assistance from these low-income programs can encourage participation in the labor force, but have mixed effects on the number of hours that they work.

www.gao.gov/assets/680/671779.pdf

Fragmentation in Workforce Development and Efforts to Coordinate Regional Workforce Development Systems, Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, April 2015

This report highlights one case study and presents best practices from four other cities: Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, and Detroit to demonstrate the importance of human capital in regional economic competitiveness. Specifically, it examines challenging trends for providers and workforce development systems that include fragmentation, instability of funding, and structural changes. Fragmentation, particularly among workforce training providers for middle-skills jobs that require credentials at the sub-baccalaureate level, is suggested to limit information available to job seekers, create duplications of services among providers, and discourage outcome measurement and program evaluation.

Recommendations for improving regional collaboration are supported by lessons learned from successful regional development models in other cities.

www.frbatlanta.org/-/media/Documents/commdev/publications/discussionpapers/dp1502.pdf?la=en